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Editorials

The Day K. Burned the Mountain

THE FLIGHT of the U-2 began as a routine bit of espionage. But there was nothing routine about the untimeliness of this flight or the tragic ineptitude with which we handled the incident after it backfired. Blunder was piled on blunder in a display of diplomatic immaturity that can only be described as monumental and which left our President naked to the brutal assault of our enemies.

There is no doubt that the U-2 flight triggered off Khrushchev's security psychosis. Neither is there any doubt that our presumed policy of forcing an "open skies" surveillance upon the USSR stung his pride, affronted his dignity and aroused his bellicosity. But none of these circumstances explains the reckless abandon with which the Soviet Premier scuttled the summit meeting that marked the consummation of two years of intensive labor and propaganda. His explosive insults, his charges of aggression and treachery, his attempt to impose impossible satisfactions upon a penitent Eisenhower made it evident to the world that he descended on Paris simply to turn the already simmering summit into a raging volcano. Why?

One popular view is that when Khrushchev learned he could not bluff us out of Berlin, he decided to pick up his marbles with loud howls about having been "cheated." In other words, the ugly realization that he could not bring home the bacon from Paris made him hunt for any pretext that would rationalize an indefinite postponement of the once-coveted summit conference. He found such a pretext in the heaven-sent U-2; one misdirected flight gave him an excuse for sulking in his tent and lashing out at his fellow chieftains with the righteous wrath of a latter-day Achilles.

Unfortunately, this oversimplified view does not help

is to understand why Khrushchev not only sabotaged the summit but also sacrificed everything he counted on by the last two years of mingled bluster and cajolery. At the abortive summit Khrushchev made it impossible to negotiate an accommodation on Berlin. He stymied any advance in the Geneva disarmament conference and the Geneva test-ban treaty. By demanding that the U. S. President grovel before his face, and by the frustration he forced upon Macmillan and de Gaulle, Khrushchev dealt a mortal blow to the personal summitry which he created.

It is indeed possible that Khrushchev's summit conduct was dictated by drastic changes at home. He may have become the prisoner of the Presidium; he may be boxed in by a resentful military clique; he may be waging a battle to dodge the lime pit or a slow train through Siberia. We do not know whether or not the Paris fiasco means that Khrushchev is walking into the grim twilight of past Kremlin gods, and perhaps it does not matter much.

What matters is that Khrushchev's brand of coexistence has apparently had its day. The Cold War is on again, and the barometer is falling fast. The West had better button up and prepare its defenses against icy blasts. Where will they strike? Berlin seems the obvious spot, but with coexistence dead, what reason is there to restrain Mao on the matter of India or Quemoy? The fact is that the West must learn to live with crises in the grim days that will try our souls. But there are no grounds for despair. Russia wants no war. During four years the U-2 was untouchable in Soviet skies. Russian defenses would be a sieve for the hell-fire poured out by bombers. Khrushchev knows that. So does Marshal Malinovsky.

Spies and Morality

When Francis G. Powers penetrated Russian airspace in his U-2 reconnaissance plane the outcome of his mission sent a great cold front moving over the international political landscape. It also uncovered a puzzling degree of moral confusion in our own ranks and among our allies.

One can at once understand an outsider's momentary delight in the embarrassment of a big and occasionally overbearing neighbor. Still, it remains regrettable as the *British Spectator* put it, that those who "did everything but dance in the streets when Mr. Khrushchev made his announcement," needed at this late date to be reminded of the simple fact that "the

United States is our chief ally, and the Soviet Union our chief enemy, in the Cold War."

More regrettable, however, was the unreasoning outburst of moral indignation in some circles at home. No one questions the sincerity behind much of this naive breast beating. But the *New York Times* sounded the blunt truth in noting that this sincerity "is matched by the nauseating hypocrisy with which Premier Khrushchev, who is not naive, has been castigating us for our act of aggression."

One troubling feature of these laments is their vague and unspecified character. Norman Cousins began his examination of conscience in the May 21 issue of *Satur-*